

HB 1231 -- DRIVER'S LICENSE EXAMINATIONS

SPONSOR: Davis

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on International Trade and Immigration by a vote of 7 to 1.

This bill requires Missouri driver's license examinations to be administered in English so that the applicant can demonstrate his or her ability to sufficiently understand highway traffic signs and safety warnings. The Director of the Department of Revenue cannot supply or permit the use of language interpreters in connection with the required written and driving tests.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on General Revenue Fund in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013. Estimated Income on Other State Funds of \$0 in FY 2011, \$46,000 in FY 2012, and \$0 in FY 2013.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this is a matter of public safety, will save the state money, and will encourage immigrants to learn the English language.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Davis; and Honorable Randy Terrill, Oklahoma House of Representatives.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that it unfairly discriminates against persons who are not proficient in or cannot read English. Driver's license officials are allowed to read the test to illiterate Missourians who cannot read the street signs in any language but requires immigrants who read in another language to take the written exam in English.

Testifying against the bill were American Civil Liberties Union of Eastern Missouri; and Jorge Riopedre, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan St. Louis.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that Missouri currently administers the written test in 12 languages and allows interpreters.

Testifying on the bill was State Highway Patrol.